

Alexander Stewart House
(Embassy of Luxembourg)
2200 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D. C.

HABS No. DC-272

HABS
WASH,
214-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
ALEXANDER STEWART HOUSE
(EMBASSY OF LUXEMBOURG)

HABS No. DC-272

WASH, 217-

Location: 2200 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C.;
on the south side of Massachusetts Avenue, and
bordered by 22nd Street (formerly Boundary Street)
and Que Street. UTM: 18.322260 .4308690

Present Owner: Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

Present Occupant: Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

Present Use: Embassy residence

Statement of
Significance: This limestone structure in the Louis XV manner is skill-
fully balanced with Louis XVI details. The building con-
forms to an irregular-shaped lot, which is defined by
Massachusetts Avenue, Que Street, 22nd Street, and the
west party line. Each street elevation is treated as a
major facade. Those on the avenue and 22nd Street act
together as a focal point for the convergence of the
thoroughfares. Occupied as a residence throughout its
history, the house and its original service facilities
remain unchanged.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Lot and Square:

The building is located in Square 2511, lot 38 (formerly lot 38 in
Block 5, "Kalorama Heights").

B. Original and Subsequent Owners:

The following chain of title to the property shows the owners of
the present structure and of any known preceding structures on the
site:

1907 Deed March 5, 1907, recorded May 15, 1907 in
Liber 3073 folio 259

Katherine Medill McCormick
To
Isabel Anderson

"...Lot...(38) in James B. Nicholson's Subdivision of lots
in Block...(5) 'Kalorama Heights', as per plat recorded in
Liber County No. 9 folio 102 of the Records of the Office of
the Surveyor of the District of Columbia..."

1908 Deed February 8, 1908, recorded February 10, 1908 in
Liber 3137 folio 104

Isabel Anderson et vir
To
Margaret Gray Stewart

"This Deed made...by and between Isabel Anderson (acting and contracting in relation to her sole and separate estate) and Larz Anderson, her husband, of the District of Columbia, parties of the first part, and Margaret Gray Stewart of the District of Columbia, party of the second part, for and in consideration of the sum of Twenty Thousand (20,000) Dollars to them paid by the party of the second part, do hereby grant and convey...Lot...(38) in James B. Nicholson's subdivision of part of Block...(5) 'Kalorama Heights'..."

1931 Deed May 26, 1931, recorded June 8, 1931 in
Liber 6564 folio 255

Helen S. De Vore
To
Mary E. Stewart

Lot 38 in James B. Nicholson's Subdivision of part of Block 5, "Kalorama Heights": "...now known for purposes of taxation as Lot 38, Square 2511. Also parts of Lots...(19),...(20), and...(21), in Block...(3), 'Kalorama Heights'..now known for purposes of taxation as Lot 813, Square 2510...The interest hereby intended to be conveyed being the one-half undivided interest in said described properties which the said party of the first part inherited as one of the two heirs-at-law of Margaret G. Stewart..."

1941 Deed March 5, 1941, recorded March 8, 1941 in
Liber 7578 folio 222

Mary E. Stewart
To
H.R.H. The Grand Duchess of Luxembourg

Lot 38, Square 2511."...for and in consideration of the sum of Forty thousand (40,000) Dollars..."

1962 Deed March 12, 1962, recorded March 15, 1962 in
Liber 11767 folio 236

H.R.H. Charlotte, The Grand Duchess of Luxembourg
and H.R.H. Prince Felix of Luxembourg, her husband
To
The Government of Luxembourg

"Witnesseth, That in consideration of \$160,000 Dollars the
parties of the first part do grant unto the party of the
second part...Lot 38, Block 5, 'Kalorama Heights'..."

Source: Recorder of Deeds, Washington, D.C.

C. Date of Erection:

The building was begun in 1908 and completed in 1909.

D. Building Permits:

The applications for the following building permits were filed by
the architect, contractor or owner's agent and provide significant
data:

No. 2811, March 24, 1908

Permit to build dwelling

Owner: Alexander Stewart

Architect: Bruce Price and de Sibour

Builder: George A. Fuller Co.

Estimated cost: \$92,000.

Filed with No. 2811, March 24, 1908

Application for Building Projections, No. 69748, February 12, 1908

1 area: 6' X 4' (on Mass. Ave.)

2 areas: 7'-6" X 4' (on Mass. Ave.)

1 area: 14'-6" X 4' (on Mass. Ave.)

2 areas: 6' X 4' (on 22nd St.)

1 area: 6' X 4' (on Que St.)

1 area: 40' X 4' (on Que St.)

1 porch: 16' X 4" (on Mass. Ave.)

Steps to main entrance: 10' X 7' (on Mass. Ave.)

No. 3229, April 20, 1908

Permit for Hoisting Engine

No. 4156, June 25, 1908

Permit to erect one electric passenger elevator

Owner: Alexander Stewart

Mechanic: Otis Elevator Co.

Dimensions: 4'-2" X 3'-6"

Estimated cost: \$2780.

Source: Record Group 351, Records of the District of Columbia, Building Permits 1877-1949, the Legislative and Natural Resources Branch, Civil Div., National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C.

E. Alterations and Additions:

No significant changes have been made.

F. Architect: J. H. de Sibour (Bruce Price & de Sibour, New York City)

See biography of J. H. de Sibour under 1700 Massachusetts Avenue.

G. Known Plans, Drawings and Elevations, etc.:

Elevation and plan of elevator. Blueprint.
Filed with Permit No. 4156, June 25, 1908
Elevation: scale 1/2" = 1'
Plan: scale 1" = 1'
Otis Elevator Co.

"Plan showing Projection of Entrance areas, etc."
Ink on linen. Scale 1/8" = 1'. Dated 7 Feb. 1908.
Filed with Permit No. 2811, March 24, 1908
"Bruce Price & de Sibour, Architects
1133 Broadway, New York"

H. Important Old Views: none found.

I. Residents:

1. City and telephone directories list the following tenants:

1910-1912 Alexander Stewart
1913-1916 Mrs. Margaret G. Stewart
1917-1918 Vacant
1919-1920 Mrs. Alexander Stewart, widow
1921-1932 Mrs. Margaret Stewart
1933-1937 Mrs. Mary E. Stewart
1938-1941 Vacant
1942-1955 Luxembourg Legation (residence and chancery)
1956-1972 Luxembourg Embassy (from 1962 residence only)

2. The following residents were included in volumes of The Elite List: A Compilation of Selected Names of Residents of Washington City, D.C. and Ladies Shopping Guide:

1909-1911 Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Stewart
Miss Mary Stewart
Miss Stewart

1913 Mrs. Alexander Stewart

1914-1918 Mrs. Alexander Stewart
Miss Mary Stewart
Miss Helen G. Stewart

1924 Col. and Mrs. Daniel B. Devore

3. Biographies of the residents:

Alexander Stewart was born in the Province of New Brunswick, Canada on September 12th, 1829. In 1849 he moved to Wausau, Wisconsin where he was employed by a small lumber company. He rose to manager and eventually, through investments, gained control of "a great deal of lumber land in Wisconsin and Michigan" and some of the western states. (The Washington Post, 5-25-12) Active in politics, Stewart was a delegate to the 1884 Republican National Convention; and from 1895 through 1901, he served three terms as a United States Congressman from Wisconsin.

In 1908 his wife, Margaret Gray Stewart, purchased a lot at 2200 Massachusetts Avenue for \$20,000. Shortly afterwards, Alexander Stewart was issued a permit to build a \$92,000 residence on this site.

May 24, 1912 Mr. Stewart died at his home - leaving his wife, Margaret, and three daughters: Mrs. Margaret Lindsay, Miss Mary Stewart, and Miss Helen G. Stewart (later Mrs. Daniel Devore).

Sources: Who Was Who in America 1897-1941: A Companion Volume to Who's Who in America, Vol. I, Chicago: The A. N. Marquis Co., 1942.

The New York Times, 5-25-12, 13:6 (obituary).
The Washington Post, 5-25-12, 2:3 (obituary).

Mrs. Margaret G. Stewart continued to live in the house until her death around 1931. According to the city directories, her daughter Mary lived there through 1937 and then left the house vacant until she sold it three years later.

Luxembourg established their Legation in Washington in 1940 at the Shoreham Hotel. April 4, 1940 M. Hughes Le Gallais presented his credentials as Chargé D'Affaires to Secretary of State Hull. In November of the same year, his status was raised to that of Minister. The Legation received embassy status in 1955.

The Grand Duchess of Luxembourg, H. R. H. Charlotte, purchased 2200 Massachusetts Avenue from Mary E. Stewart in March 1941 "for and in consideration of Forty thousand (40,000) Dollars." (Deed recorded March 8, 1941 in Liber 7578, folio 222.) Miss Stewart evidently settled for far less than the property was worth, since its total assessed value in 1941 was \$104,118 (ground: \$27,118; improvements: \$77,000). (Lusk's D. C. Assessment Directory Service, 1941) The Grand Duchess did not live in the house, but spent her time in Montreal and London, where her ministers in exile were located during the German occupation of her country. The house was used instead by the Luxembourg Legation, which moved its residence and chancery there in 1941.

The Times-Herald reported on October 9, that "The Dowager Grand Duchess of Luxembourg, Maria Anna, is at her country's legation on Massachusetts Avenue for an indefinite stay." The Dowager Grand Duchess was 80 years old at the time, and was to die in September 1942.

In January 1962, the government of Luxembourg bought another building, 2210 Massachusetts Avenue, to serve as the chancery. Three months later, the government acquired The Grand Duchess Charlotte's property for \$160,000 and continued to use it as the Embassy residence.

Sources: Lusk's D. C. Assessment Directory Service, Washington, D. C.: Rufus S. Lusk, 1941 (Assessments as of June 30, 1941).

The Evening Star, 4-7-40, D 2:1.
Times-Herald, 10-9-41, 16:6.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This semidetached structure has a Louis XV exterior, Jacobean and Georgian interior details, and a polygonal plan. [Floors as in HABS D. C. Catalog.]
2. Condition: very good.

B. Exterior Description:

1. Overall dimensions: The three-and-one-half-story-plus-base-ment structure measures 60'-0" from north sidewalk to roof ridge. The five bay south elevation (Q Street) is 93'-2"; the two bay east elevation (22nd Street), 31'-4"; the five bay north elevation (central entrance on Massachusetts Avenue), 72'-6"; the west party wall, 30'-0"; and the single bay south-west service entrance, 32'-6".
2. Foundations: concrete footings and slab.
3. Wall construction: The building has gray limestone facing. A smooth base serves as window sill for the rusticated first floor, which is capped by bead, fascia and block string courses. Two story flat panels on smooth plinths flank recessed second and third story window bays. Separating the second floor windows from those of the third floor are lamp, spray and swag panels.
4. Structure: brick bearing walls.
5. Mechanical: The structure retains its Bryant, hot air furnace, and Dryer Manufacturing Corporation clothes washer and drier (patented 1907). The lighting is electric. The elevator is by Otis.
6. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: The north entrance vestibule is formed by the building base and first floor rustication which together break forward as a semicircular-arched Tuscan entrance having a scrolled keystone and floral swag spandrels. The line of the first floor string courses is carried across as a full entablature with bead architrave, tulip in gouge frieze, and corona and cyma cornice. The cornice is capped by a balustrade of oval guilloche with raised end blocks. The guilloche balustrade, repeated under the second floor windows, continues the wall plinth line.
7. Chimneys: Visible from the street is a west wall brick chimney with a limestone block cap and metal hood.

8. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The semicircular-arched, plate glass double door from the vestibule to the entrance hall has decorative, cast iron bar grilles surrounded by guilloche, with a rosette panel at bottom and lyre motif at top. The arched transom has a decorative wreath.
- b. Windows: All windows are four lights across, except for those of two lights which flank the central north bays.

The first floor has casements and the upper two floors have double hung windows which simulate casements. All windows have transoms except for those on the third floor. The first floor has block architraves with scrolled keystones. The second floor has semicircular-arched Tuscan architraves with console keystones and floral spandrels, the narrower bays having Tuscan architraves with scrolled keystones. Resting on decorative wall panels, the third floor windows have crossette Tuscan architraves.

9. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: slate, mansard roof with pulvinated, copper ridge cap and flashing.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The building has a tulip in gouge frieze, punctuated by rosettes centered over each bay and wall panel; and a modillion and cyma cornice. The cornice supports a panelled balustrade with balusters centered over each window bay.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: Centered over each window bay are semicircular-arched windows having hood moulds with label stops, bracket supports, and scroll keystones.

C. Interior Description:

1. Floor plans: The entrance hall, with the main stair at the west, is entered via the north vestibule. The hall has access to all major first floor rooms. In the east wall of the hall is a door to a triangular closet, the angle of which is formed by the north building wall. A double door through the east wall of the hall leads to the drawing room, which in turn is connected to a dining room. The dining room, located south of the entrance hall, leads into the pantry. The pantry connects to the service stair, and cloak and storage rooms which are directly west of the main stair and connected by a door to the entrance hall. The breakfast room, set at an acute angle to the hall, is entered from the west end of the entrance hall north wall. A lavatory, entered from the breakfast room, and a hall elevator and closet, are set between the breakfast room and north vestibule. (See plan.)

The main stair ascends one story to the second floor, which is similar in arrangement to the first floor and contains an east library over the drawing room and the principal bedroom suites. The family stair (located above the first floor entrance), ascends in an ellipse from the second floor to the third and fourth.

2. Spaces:

Entrance hall: (see photographs)

- a. Flooring: basket weave parquetry.
- b. Baseboard: 4", wood with bead cap.
- c. Wainscot: The 8'-0" high, wood wainscot has four rows of linenfold panels, recessed for the breakfast, drawing and dining room doors, and capped by a bracket and cavetto cornice.
- d. Walls: The simulated limestone, plaster walls are recessed to form lancet arches over the breakfast, drawing and dining room doors. The south chimney wall breaks forward.
- e. Cornice: scotia, bead, bracket, corona, bead, cyma and bead.
- f. Ceiling: The 14'-0" high, plaster ceiling has square panels of ribs with bosses, and trefoil and fleur-de-lis fixture rosettes at the east and west.
- g. Doorways and doors: The wood double doors to the breakfast, drawing and dining rooms have two linenfold panels below an acanthus diamond-within-square panel. The single doors to the west service stair and cloak room, the north closet and elevator, and the east closet, are concealed in the wainscot.
- h. Hardware: brass door handles; single doors having brass pendant pulls set in stiles.
- i. Lighting: There are two, six-light, gilded wood, acanthus leaf, baroque chandeliers.
- j. Heating: Opposite the entrance door, the south wall limestone chimney mantel, in the Gothic manner (6'-0" wide by 8'-0" high) has a Tudor-arched firebox surround, single flanking plinths with cluster columns, a coved architrave four quatrefoil facing panels with linenfold side panels, an ivy frieze and a bracket cornice with hood overmantel. (See detail photograph.)
- k. Stair: The oak stair ascends sixteen risers west to the first landing, seven risers north to the second landing and seven risers east to the second floor. The newel is

buttressed by a decorative console, and the balustrade has carved rinceau panels of fruit, flora and fauna. At the wall is a velvet rope handrail looped through bundled reed, brass rings.

Drawing room: (late Georgian manner. See photographs.)

- a. Flooring: herringbone parquetry.
- b. Baseboard: 8", wood with torus, cavetto and bead cap.
- c. Chairrail: 2'-8" high, wood with ogee, fascia and bead.
- d. Walls: The pale yellow, plaster walls have applied fascia and bead mouldings. The north wall is a bow, and the west chimney wall breaks forward.
- e. Cornice: The full entablature has an enriched architrave, a palmette and anthemion frieze, and a dentil, egg and dart, and astragal cornice.
- f. Ceiling: 14'-0" high, plaster, painted.
- g. Doorways and doors: At either end of the west wall is a double door to the entrance hall and the dining room. Both sets of three, raised, mahogany panels are capped by paired raised panels and framed by a double fascia and cyma architrave.
- h. Windows: The alcove formed by the north wall bow has two windows; the west one is false, having mirrored panes.
- i. Hardware: bundled reed, brass door handles set in stiles.
- j. Lighting: Flanking the west wall chimney mantel are single, three-light, crystal arm and pendant sconces. Each sconce has a crystal body, and brass base, pendant and urn cap. There is one, tear-drop, paired-arm, fourteen-light chandelier with brass, grape and leaf girdle, flambeau bowl ribs, and pendant and fern leaf crown, all connected by crystal bead and prisms drapes and pendants.
- k. Heating: The west wall chimney has a panelled cast iron firebox. The yellow marble, white trimmed mantel (6'-0" wide by 5'-0" high) has flanking Ionic pilasters with figure panels which support a talon architrave; a frieze broken forward at the center and over the pilasters; and a denticulated shelf. The overmantel gilded mirror has a semicircular arch and flanking columnette side lights. (See detail photograph.)

Dining room: (Jacobean manner, wood. See photograph.)

- a. Flooring: basket weave parquetry.

- b. Baseboard: 6", with bead cap.
- c. Walls: There are four rows of diamond-within-square panels. The east chimney wall breaks forward.
- d. Cornice: ogee, bracket, fascia, ogee and cyma.
- e. Ceiling: 14'-0" high, plaster painted white; trefoils, quatrefoils and roundels bordered by rinceau ribs in grape and leaf.
- f. Doorways and doors: There are two double doors, one to the drawing room and one to the entrance hall; and two, single doors to the pantry at the west. All doors have two diamond-within-rectangle panels. A bolection architrave with a bracket cornice surrounds the doors and their panel caps.
- g. Hardware: brass, pendant door handles set in stiles.
- h. Lighting: There are two, three-light, silver-plated sconces.
- i. Heating: The east wall chimney mantel (6'-0" wide by 7'-0" high) has a white marble firebox surround flanked by mask-panelled, limestone plinths supporting serpentine human terms with naive Ionic capitals capped by iron escutcheon blocks. Above the wood architrave, the frieze is separated into three panels by diminutive fishscale pedestals supporting female busts. The frieze is capped by a gadroon bedmould, and a corona and cyma shelf.

Breakfast room: (early Georgian manner; wood painted yellow.)

- a. Flooring: herringbone parquetry.
- b. Baseboard: 6", with quarter-round cap.
- c. Walls: four rows of flat panels.
- d. Cornice: fascia, corona and cavetto.
- e. Ceiling: 14'-0" high, plaster painted white. Slight cove.
- f. Doorways and doors: The east leaf of the raised panel double door from the hall is false. The fascia architrave is capped by an egg and dart cornice. The door to the lavatory is concealed in the panelling.
- g. Hardware: bundled-reed, brass door handles set in stiles.
- h. Lighting: Flanking the north window are single, two-light, Islamic intaglio and pendant, brass sconces.

- i. Heating: The west wall, wood and plaster chimney mantel (6'-0" wide by 5'-0" high) has a white-veined, black marble firebox surround, a wood, egg and dart architrave flanked by scroll-capped pilasters with floral pendants; a central frieze mask with floral drapes and swags broken forward over the scrolls in a rosette motif; and a talon, corona and cyma shelf. The head of the overmantel panel has fruit and floral pendants suspended from swagged clusters. (See detail photograph.)

Second floor hall:

- a. Flooring: basket weave parquetry.
- b. Baseboard: 4", wood with bead cap.
- c. Wainscot: 8'-0" high, wood linen fold panels.
- d. Walls: plaster to simulate limestone.
- e. Ceiling: 12'-0" high, plaster painted white.
- f. Doorways and doors: The double doors have linen fold and acanthus leaf, diamond-within-square panels.
- g. Hardware: oval, incised, brass door knobs.
- h. Heating: The south wall tan limestone chimney mantel has a Tudor arch with a plain architrave and an overmantel of linen fold panels.
- i. Stair: North of the south wall mantel, the elliptical spiral stair ascends twenty-three risers (generally east) to the third floor and twenty risers to the fourth. On the second floor treads flair out to one of two newels which has oriental fret panels; a diminutive swag and rosette frieze; a square urn with Ionic capital; and a glyph frieze cap. The left banister is panelled and capped by a six inch wide, moulded handrail; the right handrail has fluted and tapered, flambeau-shaped balusters.

D. Site:

1. Setting and orientation: The building faces north on a lot measuring 72'-6" on the north (Massachusetts Avenue); 31'-4" on the east (22nd Street); 93'-2" on the south (Q Street); and 66'-6" on the west.
2. Enclosures: There is a concrete retaining wall on the east and a console-terminated limestone retaining wall on the west.

3. Outbuildings: none.
4. Walks: The semicircular north entrance drive and southwest service entry are edged by limestone curbing.
5. Landscaping: An oval bed of roses is surrounded by the drive and the public sidewalk. Clipped hedges, holly, mountain laurel and azaleas elsewhere.

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This document, made from records donated to the Historic American Buildings Survey by the Commission of Fine Arts, 708 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D. C., represents studies of prime, typical, diversified and sumptuous architecture erected primarily between the years 1890 and 1930, when American society and architecture were greatly influenced by the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. The material, originally organized for adaptation to the Historic American Buildings Survey format, was first published in Massachusetts Avenue Architecture, Vol. 1, 1973, issued by the Commission of Fine Arts, Charles H. Atherton, Secretary; Donald B. Myer, Assistant Secretary; Jeffrey R. Carson, Architectural Historian; Lynda L. Smith, Historian; and J. L. Sibley Jennings, Jr., Architect. Photographs were made for the Commission by Jack E. Boucher, Linwood, New Jersey; J. Alexander, Wheaton, Maryland; and the Commission of Fine Arts Staff. The material, donated December 1973, was coordinated for the HABS documentation in 1978 by Lucy Pope Wheeler, HABS Writer/Editor.

Documentation of this property could not have been achieved without the cooperation of organizations and people concerned with the Commission's study--The Embassy of Luxembourg, and His Excellency Jean Wagner, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.